

# Editors Editorial

01/02

“But these, dear Indians, dear Hindus, are your leaders and your holy men. They are your mirrors and your death wish. Take a good look at them. Because they are not looking out for you.” These scathing words by Shuddhabrata Sengupta, from a piece published recently in India and reprinted in this issue of e-flux journal, condemn the country’s leaders for their role in fostering the conditions that led to the catastrophic number of coronavirus deaths the country is now suffering. It is not just India’s political leaders that are at fault, but also the holy men who advise them – spiritual leaders whose fatalism and deference before higher powers became lethal in the human, political domain of real needs. This is not to say that the holy men are frauds. On the contrary, the immediate horror of the pandemic in India is actually a reflection of their deference to cosmic forces that are completely indifferent to human life. The holy men are even as holy as the stars – stars that we should all remember don’t give two fucks about us, about administration or politics concerning people and life: “The stars, indifferent in heaven, feel no need to laugh at you. Frankly, no matter what you think about them, they don’t even care about you.”

Also in this issue, Jonas Staal urges the consideration of different forms and recognitions of collectivization necessary for whichever egalitarian futures could be in store for us – if we could only get past the propaganda that has us cower in mortal terror alone, and most certainly not together. As they prepare for their documenta in 2022, ruangrupa share a particularly fecund form of collective practice that informs all of the group’s artistic activities. The “lumbung,” a building that Indonesian farmers use to store surplus crops after harvest, becomes a source of ongoing nourishment for the entire community. In a conversation in this issue, ruangrupa detail how this concept – the opposite of hoarding and exclusion in every way – might play out in the art world and its extended environs.

The Italian researcher Marcello Tari disagrees with at least some of the ideas expressed above. “The gateway to the transformation of self and world,” he writes in this issue, “... is not to be found in ‘collectivization’ or in the affirmation of will.” Such means, along with state reform and technological acceleration, Tari holds, don’t allow the truth and the reality of existence to meet. He describes revolution and love as deeply parallel experiences, and also has a short conversation with Matt Peterson of Woodbine on the themes of spirituality and combat.

Pelin Tan takes a trip, via filmmakers Joana Hadjithomas and Khalil Joreige, to İzmir, which

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is or was also Smyrna. The visits both imaginary and real are made together in spirit and in conversation with Etel Adnan, and Hadjithomas and Adnan's twinned family histories, memories of exile, fire, incessant description, nostalgia, and sea. Alaina Claire Feldman guides a deep listening of humpback whale song and traces the cosmic and earthly impacts of its recorded form. In poetry editor Simone White's second selection for the journal, poet Patrick Rosal pairs exquisite images and blistering words. Finally, Luis Camnitzer pays tender tribute to his friend, Antonio Caro, in a remembrance penned days after the late artist departed.

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